FAQ's pertaining to

ZAKAAT

(Last updated: 03/03/2025)

JAMIATUL ULAMA
KwaZulu-Natal
COUNCIL OF MUSLIM THEOLOGIANS

www.jamiat.org.za

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Q. Upon whom is Zakaat compulsory?

A. Zakat is compulsory on every sane, mature Muslim who is the owner of Zakaatable assets (this generally refers to money whether cash or savings, trading stock, gold and silver in any form, and non-property investments) equivalent to the Nisaab and holds the same for one lunar year.

Q. What is Nisaab?

A. The Nisaab is a monetary threshold. One who gains Zakaatable assets equivalent to the Nisaab amount after deducting liabilities, will be regarded as a Nisaab holder. The payment of Zakaat (for first time Zakaat payers) will be due exactly one lunar year later if the person still possesses the Nisaab amount or more.

Q. What is the value of Nisaab?

A. The Nisaab is the value of 612.36 grams of silver.
(Current approximate value on 03/03/2025 is R11 696).

Q. How much will I have to pay?

A. One will have to give 2.5% of one's net Zakaatable assets.

Q. What if one's wealth fluctuates during the course of the year?

A. Fluctuation of wealth during the year does not affect the payment of Zakaat. Zakaat will still be applicable on its due date on the amount held at the time on condition it is equal to or above the Zakaat Nisaab. Only if a person becomes insolvent or his finances fall into a negative balance does the calculation of Zakaat end. When the person gains wealth again, a new cycle of Zakaat calculation will begin.

Q. Who can I give Zakaat to?

A. Zakaat may only be given to needy Muslims who do not own in excess of their personal needs, surplus assets equal to the value of Nisaab. Muslim debtors whose liabilities exceed their Zakaatable and surplus assets also fall within the Zakaat-eligible category.

A person may not give their Zakaat to their parents and grandparents (including great-grandparents), children or grandchildren (including great-grandchildren) or spouse. It is permissible to give Zakaat to all other relatives including siblings if they are Zakaat eligible.

N.B. Zakaat cannot be given for construction projects (like building a Masjid or digging a borehole), nor to the rich or non-Muslims.

Q. Is Zakaat due on one's residential property and personal vehicle?

A. Zakaat is not obligatory on personal items considered essential necessities, such as one's residence, clothing, utensils, furniture, personal vehicle, and household appliances without which daily life would prove excessively challenging.

Q. Can a husband pay Zakaat on behalf of his wife?

A. A husband is permitted to pay the Zakaat obligation on behalf of his wife, provided he has obtained her consent to do so.

Q. Is Zakaat compulsory on personal gold & silver?

A. Zakaat is obligatory on gold and silver in one's ownership, regardless of the reason for possession or the form in which it is held.

Q. Is Zakaat due on cash holdings in a bank account?

A. Zakaat is obligatory on all cash holdings, whether in one's physical possession or held in a bank account.

Q. Do I have to pay Zakaat on funds I have loaned to another party?

A. Zakaat is compulsory on outstanding debts receivable, whether arising from providing a loan or from selling goods on credit. The creditor may choose to pay Zakaat on such debts receivable according to their personal Zakaat year, or alternatively, defer payment until the debt is settled, at which point any Zakaat due for previous years must be paid.

Q. If I am currently in debt, can I deduct those debts when calculating my Zakaat obligation?

A. Outstanding debts are deductible from one's total zakatable assets when calculating Zakaat. In the case of long-term debts paid through instalments, only the total instalment amount due for one year is deductible.

Q. I have not paid Zakaat for years. What do I do?

A. If you have failed to discharge your obligation of giving Zakaat for previous years, it is imperative that you make amends. You must estimate the number of years you have missed and calculate your net assets for each year. You should pay the Zakaat owed for those years without delay and seek forgiveness from Allah Ta'ala.

Q. When we give Zakaat to our relatives is it essential to inform them that it is from the Zakaat money? Because when we inform them they are reluctant to take it. Hence please explain.

A. It is not necessary to inform your relatives that the assistance you are providing them is from your Zakaat money. As long as they are eligible recipients of Zakaat, your obligation will be fulfilled. However, you should ensure that you do not give Zakaat to your ascendants, descendants, or spouse, as this is not permissible.

Q. I have a small business and I have a few staff. I cannot afford to pay all my staff their salaries. Can I use Zakaat money to pay them?

A. It is not permissible to use Zakaat money to pay the salaries of your employees, even if you are facing financial difficulties. Zakaat is a sacred obligation, and its funds may be used only for the purposes prescribed by the Shari'ah. If any of your employees are eligible to receive Zakaat, you may assist them with Zakaat funds, but these cannot be counted as part of their salaries.

Q. Do I have to pay Zakaat on property investments from which rentals are received?

A. Zakaat is not payable on the actual property itself. However, you are obligated to pay Zakaat on the rental income you receive from these property investments, as this income is considered part of your wealth.

Q. If my 1-year-old child was given a gift of a Kruger coin by his grandparents, then who pays the Zakaat on this? The child or his parents?

A. Zakaat is not waajib on the minor child for the Kruger coin gifted by the grandparents or for any other asset until the child reaches the age of buloogh (maturity). Neither do the parents have to pay Zakaat on behalf of the child.

Q. Can a person build a house and give it as Zakaat to a Zakaat recipient?

A. It is permissible to construct a house with the intention of giving it as Zakaat to an eligible recipient of Zakaat. The market value of the house will be calculated towards the Zakaat amount discharged.

Q. A woman lost her jewellery 20 years ago. Whilst moving houses, she found that very same jewellery which she had lost. Does she now have to pay Zakaat for the lost jewellery for the past 20 years?

A. Since the woman had lost hope of finding her lost jewellery 20 years ago, Zakaat was not waajib on her for that jewellery during those 20 years. Now that she has found it, Zakaat will be waajib on her for the current year if she meets the nisaab threshold.

Q. I have a diamond necklace which my husband gave me as a gift. Do I have to pay Zakaat on it?

A. There is no Zakaat on precious stones like diamonds, unless bought for the purpose of trade. However, if the necklace contains gold or silver, Zakaat will have to be paid on the gold/silver component.